



UDC 323(669.1)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32631/pb.2024.4.04>

**OLAGOKE OLUWAFEMI AWOTAYO,**

*Master of Science,  
Osun State University (Osogbo, Nigeria),  
Department of Political Sciences;  
 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9768-8910>,  
e-mail: olagoke.awotayo@uniosun.edu.ng;*

**NIMAT OLUWAYOMI YUSUF,**

*Master of Science,  
Osun State University (Osogbo, Nigeria),  
Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution;  
 <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-7122-7579>,  
e-mail: Oluwayomi.yusuf@uniosun.edu.ng;*

**SAMUEL OLADOSU ADEDAYO,**

*Master of Science,  
Osun State University (Osogbo, Nigeria),  
Global Affairs and Sustainable Development Institute*

## **SAFEGUARDING NIGERIA: STRATEGIES FOR COMBATING INSURGENCY AND TERRORISM**

The paper appraises the strategic responses by Nigeria's government to the intractable difficulties posed by insurgency, banditry, and terrorism experienced largely in its northern parts, identifying key initiatives such as the establishment of the 7th Division of the Nigerian Army, among other international and local collaborations and initiatives like the Civilian Joint Task Force. Another contentious issue is the vote of support by the National Assembly for a proposal to engage mercenaries in defence, reflecting the ongoing debate over security measures. The methodological approach of the paper is qualitative, with thematic analysis of data from secondary sources such as newspapers, books, and academic journals. The findings indicate that Nigeria's security strategy is largely reactive, failing to address the fundamental root causes of violence, which are socio-economic disparities, political marginalisation, and historical grievances. The limitations of ad hoc security policies are evident; they tend to favour short-term solutions over long-term stability. Notably, it is such options for employing mercenaries that have been strongly challenged, especially regarding the implications of the alternatives on national sovereignty and in adequately addressing the root causes of such a challenge. In the absence of such a policy intervening into the root causes, which this study strongly calls for, inclusive national dialogue among and between the diverse ethnic groupings should be pursued. This could resolve not only the ethno-religious tensions that breed but also the systemic marginalisation of Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups. The paper concludes by emphasising that what is needed is a coherent strategy beyond immediate security responses, which would integrate socio-economic development with good governance. It warns that unless these foundational issues are resolved, even if terrorism is resolved, the cycle of violence and the threat of separatist agitations will probably continue. A holistic approach toward national security is imperative for long-term peace and stability in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** *strategies, security, insurgency, banditry, terrorism, countermeasures, peace and development.*

### *Original article*

**INTRODUCTION.** Nigeria's insecurity and crime situations are attributed to political instability, ethnicity, citizen alienation, terrorism, and violence. Nigeria was included in a recent ranking of the world's nations with the least peace. Nigeria was classified as the 17th least peaceful nation

in the 2021 Global Peace Index<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, Nigeria is ranked as the third most affected by terrorism, according to the Global Terrorism Index.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Global Peace Ranking.* <https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/2012-GlobalPeaceIndexReport.pdf>.

An additional serious threat in Nigeria is the potential for mass murder or genocide is another serious threat in Nigeria. Nigeria also ranked second on the list of the most vulnerable countries in Africa and was also listed as the sixth most vulnerable country globally. This risk is increased by the nation's nearly 200 million-person population, a high infant mortality rate, on-going battle-related fatalities, a history of mass murder, and ethnic fragmentation. Kidnapping for ransom has become a widespread problem in Nigeria, with thousands of victims. According to a study of Nigeria's kidnapping industry, between 2011 and 2020, Nigerians paid at least \$18.34 million (N7 billion) in ransom to kidnappers. Kidnapping for ransom has become a widespread problem in Nigeria, with thousands of victims. According to a study on the country's kidnapping industry, Nigerian citizens paid nothing less than \$18.34 million (#7 billion) in ransom to the kidnapers between 2011 and 2020. Terrorism, as stated by Ogbaji (2023), has harmed numerous nations around the world. The most frequent is that resources are diverted away from development projects and onto internal security operations. These resources are also utilised to safeguard important areas, secure political leaders, and check travellers at airports. All of these tasks require an increasing amount of labor and time and have negative effects on the country's progress. In other words, terrorism can be simply understood as the use of violence and intimidation to force, convince, and garner public attention. Nobody or anything seems immune to the atrocities that terrorist organizations, bandits, kidnappers, and ritual killers are committing in Nigeria. Terrorists specifically targeted the elderly, children, men, women, the wealthy, the poor, politicians, religious leaders, churches, mosques, markets, banks, security personnel, and even domesticated animals such as cows and goats.

To combat terrorism, banditry, and insurgency, the Nigerian government has implemented a variety of policy measures. Hence, there is a need for policy change as a result of the previous military strategies, which had previously been ad hoc and had not addressed the threat. They went into effect in 2010, after the group began acting violently as a result of the passing of its leader and the ascension of Abubakar Shekau as a replacement (Loimeier, 2012). These include bringing arrested individuals to justice, deploying troops, temporarily closing a portion of the Northern Nigerian border, expelling unauthorised immigrants, enhancing the counterterrorism capabilities of security forces, installing surveillance technology, and starting government negotiations.

**PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH.** The idea of this research is therefore to investigate the Nigerian responses to terrorism, banditry and insurgency in the northern regions with a view to providing lasting solutions to these multi-faceted security threats. In particular, it examines the range of measures in response to these threats undertaken by the Nigerian Army, international partners, and the Civilian Joint Task Force. Besides, this research aims at assessing the impact of mercenary involvement and the National Assembly's capacity to provide recommendations for these security problems.

The objective of this article is to give a clear perception of the ongoing security threats in the northern part of the Nigeria and recommend on the measures that could supplement the country's counter terrorism endeavors. Indeed, it is the view of this research that addressing these critical tasks can make significant contribution with policy decisions capable of enhancing the security landscape in the region.

**METHODOLOGY.** The methodology that was adopted for this research was qualitative nature and has used newspapers, internet articles and research papers. This basically formed the methodology of the study with an aim of undertaking an assessment of the security threats posed by these terrorist groups in Nigeria. The use of the diverse sources of information accustomed the researcher to a multi-faceted approach to the issue. Another advantage of newspapers and internet sources was that they gave immediate information and background information when necessary and focus group interviews gave an insight to real life experience in a certain culture. The use of scholarly materials again added credibility to the findings and This validation of data boosted the reliability of the results allowing the researcher to go deep in elucidating how terrorist groups have transformed the security landscape of Nigeria and proffer sustainable solutions for such security threats. By employing this comprehensive and methodologically sound approach, the study not only presents a robust analysis of the security threats in Nigeria but also ensures that its findings can be reliably replicated or reinterpreted in future research.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

##### *Terrorism: Towards a Conceptual Orientation*

Prior to the terrorist attack on the USA on September 11, terrorism was largely ignored. It is currently one of the top issues on the minds of both governments and people worldwide. Terrorism remains a global phenomenon that needs to be addressed with all seriousness; the trends of terrorism in the world persist as being a lot of

concern; for instance, in GTI 2024, 22 %, or 8,352 deaths have been shown—one of the highest tallies for terrorists since 2017. Significantly, the center of gravity of this crisis has now shifted to Central Sahel, which hosts more than half of all the fatalities attributed to terrorism and includes a substantial number in Nigeria<sup>1</sup>. Terrorism deaths rose by 34 percent in Nigeria during 2023 amid rising conflict between the Islamic State West Africa and Boko Haram<sup>2</sup>. Recent incidents that tend to point in this direction include increased attacks along the Lagos-Ibadan corridor and the killing of traditional rulers in Ekiti state (Badiora, 2024). These make the need for comprehensive and sustainable counter-terrorism strategies in Nigeria rather urgent to respond to these multidimensional threats posed by extremist groups. Liorca-Vivero (2008) argued, the subject remains unexplored. Over the past ten years, terrorism has been largely to blame for the deaths and suffering that have occurred throughout the world. For many nations today, terrorism is the biggest threat to national security. Terrorism has harmful effects on economic development due to its negative impact on trade and capital inflows, in addition to its devastating psychological trauma on victims and their families (Abadie, Gardeazabal, 2008; Enders, Sandler, 2012).

The United Nations has defined terrorism as “the threat or the actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation”. In the face of globalisation phenomena and integration dynamics, defining terrorism in a single sentence has become difficult, particularly when cyber technology is used in executing terrorism acts (Akinola, Uzodike, 2013; Isyaku, 2013). In Nigeria, terrorism has dominated media and public discourse for the last ten years, resulting in substantial physical and psychological consequences. Recurrent attacks, the killing of people, the destruction of property, population displacement, and other aggressive activities have been hallmarks of terrorism operations led by Boko Haram.

Since 2009, Boko Haram assaults have become more frequent and more severe. The cult planned and carried out a string of the deadliest

bombings in Kano, the major commercial hub in northern Nigeria, in January 2012. More than 180 people were killed as a result of the attacks, including a significant number of civilians and security officers, which is thought to be among the highest death tolls in a single day since the group started its violent campaign in July 2009<sup>3</sup>. The Islamist group’s activities include bombings, suicide bombings, shootings, church and police station arson, and kidnappings of girls and women. As a result, the nation is ranked among the top 10 countries with the highest rate of terrorism. Ever since its insurgent campaign to overthrow the Nigerian government and establish an Islamic state based on Sharia began in 2009, at least 3,500 people have lost their lives. Furthermore, the organization’s impact extends beyond security to the political and socio-economic aspects of governance, exposing and further aggravating the country’s regional, ethnic, and religious fault lines.

The Federal Government extended the existing states of emergency that had been declared in some parts of Borno and Yobe in late 2011 to the three most affected states of the region in May 2013 as a result of the group’s attacks and activity escalating in 2013<sup>4</sup>. The cult used new strategies of kidnapping female students and women in the northeastern region of the country in April 2014 as a result of the attacks’ sharp increase in frequency between 2013 and 2014. The United Nations Security Council committee blacklisted Boko Haram on May 22, 2014, as a result of the group’s abduction of approximately 300 girls from the Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok on April 14, 2014<sup>5</sup>.

More than 5000 people were killed in Boko Haram fighting between 2013 and 2014. More than six million Nigerians have been impacted, and more than 300,000 have been displaced, according to United Nations and Nigerian officials. And in the first half of 2014, at least 2000 people

<sup>1</sup> Vision of Humanity. *Global Terrorism Index 2023*. <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/global-terrorism-index/#/>.

<sup>2</sup> Michael, Ch. (2024, March 26). *Nigeria remains high in global terrorism index ranking 2024*. Business Day. <https://businessday.ng/news/article/nigeria-remains-high-in-global-terrorism-index-ranking-2024/>.

<sup>3</sup> Human Right Watch. (2012, January 23). *Nigerian: Boko Haram widens Terror Campaign*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2012/01/23/nigeria-boko-haram-widens-terror-campaign>.

<sup>4</sup> Blanchard, L. P. (2014). *Nigeria’s Boko Haram: Frequently Asked Questions*. The UN Refugee Agency. <https://www.refworld.org/reference/countryrep/uscrs/2014/en/99695>.

<sup>5</sup> Nicholas, M. (2014, May 23). *United Nations Council Committee Blacklists Nigeria’s Boko Haram*. Reuters Report. <https://www.reuters.com/article/markets/commodities/un-security-council-committee-blacklists-nigerias-boko-haram-idUSL1N0081TJ/>.

died<sup>1</sup>. As a result, the group's recent threats have called into question Nigeria's status as a single territory. Shekau, the sect leader, announced the territories under his group's control as the "New Caliphate" on August 24, 2014, with stringent Islamic laws governing them<sup>2</sup>.

F. C. Onuoha (2013) stated that Boko Haram has effectively become a topic of interest for states, security agencies, journalists, and scholars due to its escalating violent attacks on a variety of civilian and military targets in Nigeria since July 2009, when it launched a fleeting anti-government revolt. He further noted that attacks on Nigeria's telecommunications infrastructure, using the Taliban case in Afghanistan, show how new jihadist organisations frequently mimic the tactics or strategies used by more established terrorist organisations to solve problems or accomplish their strategic goals. D. E. Agbiboa (2013) hypothesised that the violation of basic human rights, corruption, poverty, and unconstitutional and anti-democratic practices in the northern region of the Nigerian state were the root causes of Boko Haram's terrorist activities, which he described as a twin phenomenon that emerged from religious tenets. B. Maiangwa, U. O. Uzodike, A. Whetho and H. Onapajo (2012) agreed that the rise of the radical Islamist group Boko Haram has increased unrest in Nigeria and beyond, leading to deadly bombings of police officers, public figures, houses of worship, and innocent bystanders. The embers that fan the flames of the terrorist insurgency include a lack of security, widespread elite corruption and military brutality, ongoing economic difficulties, and outdated and underdeveloped infrastructure. The violence shows no signs of ceasing.

#### *National Security Strategy and Terrorism*

National security is a critical aspect of any nation's welfare and prosperity. In Nigeria, the National Security Strategy (NSS) of 2019 outlines the various security challenges that the country faces under different threats. These threats range from terrorism and extremism to armed banditry, militia group activities, farmers-pastoralist clashes, transnational organised crimes, border security,

cyber and technology challenges, socio-political developments, environmental challenges, economic challenges, as well as regional and global challenges. The NSS aims to ensure physical security, a just society, peaceful co-existence, national unity, prosperity, and sustainable development while also promoting Nigeria's influence in regional, continental, and global affairs.

Key figures in the security sector have played crucial roles in developing and implementing the NSS and addressing the country's security challenges. These individuals include government officials, military leaders, intelligence heads, and policymakers who have worked tirelessly to enhance Nigeria's security architecture. Their contributions have been instrumental in coordinating efforts to combat terrorism, improve border security, tackle cyber threats, address socio-political issues, mitigate environmental challenges, and bolster economic stability.

The NSS identifies terrorism and extremism as significant security threats, particularly in the form of Boko Haram in the Northeast region. The group has carried out numerous attacks, resulting in the loss of lives and the displacement of populations. The Armed Forces have been engaged in various operations, such as Operations HADARIN DAJI and EX SAHEL SANITY, to counter these threats and restore peace in affected areas. Despite these efforts, the insurgency persists, indicating the need for a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of extremism and promotes sustainable peacebuilding initiatives.

Armed banditry and militia group activities pose another challenge to Nigeria's security landscape, especially in the North-West region. The presence of multiple bandit groups has resulted in widespread violence, kidnappings, and attacks on communities. State governments have initiated reconciliatory peace meetings with these groups, leading to the release of kidnapped victims and some level of success. However, the complex nature of the problem necessitates a multifaceted political, military, and economic strategy to effectively address the underlying grievances and enhance security in the region.

Farmers-pastoralist clashes have also emerged as a significant security concern, fuelled by competition over resources, land disputes, and ethnic tensions. These conflicts have led to the loss of lives, the destruction of livelihoods, and the displacement of populations. Through policy interventions and community engagement, the government has taken steps to mediate between the conflicting parties and mitigate the root causes of clashes. Efforts to promote peaceful coexistence and address the underlying socio-political

<sup>1</sup> Blanchard, L. P. (2014). *Nigeria's Boko Haram: Frequently Asked Questions*. The UN Refugee Agency. <https://www.refworld.org/reference/countryrep/uscrs/2014/en/99695>.

<sup>2</sup> Sahara Reporters. (2014, August 24). *Boko Haram Declares Caliphate, Shows Scenes of Fleeing Soldiers, Captured Arms & Civilian Massacres*. <http://saharareporters.com/2014/08/24/new-gruesome-video-boko-haramdeclares-caliphate-shows-scenes-fleeing-soldiers-civilian>.

issues are essential for sustainable peace and security in the affected regions.

Transnational organised crimes, border security challenges, cyber threats, environmental degradation, economic instability, and regional and global security threats further complicate Nigeria's security landscape. Addressing these multifaceted challenges requires a holistic approach that involves all sectors of society and leverages national power to promote security, peace, and prosperity. By implementing the objectives outlined in the NSS, Nigeria can enhance its security architecture, strengthen resilience against threats, and position itself as a key player in regional and global security dynamics.

Nigeria's National Security Strategy of 2019 provides a comprehensive framework for addressing the diverse security challenges facing the country. By leveraging all elements of national power and fostering a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, Nigeria can effectively mitigate security threats, promote peace and stability, and advance its national interests on the regional and global stage. The contributions of key figures in the security sector are crucial in implementing the NSS and shaping Nigeria's security landscape for a more secure and prosperous future.

*Insurgency and Terrorism Emboldened: They Fear No Authority*

In 2022, C. Ndujihe, H. Umoru and I. Hassan (2022) revealed that terrorists had assaulted the Abuja-Kaduna train, leading to numerous Nigerians questioning the government over its responsibility to ensure the safety of citizens and their belongings, to which it made an oath to uphold. B. Gbadebo<sup>1</sup> stated that the assailants of the Abuja-Kaduna train had threatened to take their lives if their demands were not satisfied. In response to this atrocity, people who lived in Kaduna State organized a peaceful demonstration, imploring the administration to conduct a large-scale raid on terrorist hideouts in the jungle. Additionally, they asked for a final end to the ongoing killings and kidnappings by criminals in the area. K. Omonobi, I. Nwabughioqu and I. Hassan-Wuyo<sup>2</sup> reported that the Nigerian Railway Corporation

noted that 141 of those abducted were unaccounted for. The captors claimed, however, to hold 168 individuals hostage, among whom was Alwan Ali Hassan, the acting manager of the Bank of Agriculture, who was released after a ransom of a hundred million naira was supposedly paid, an amount that the terrorists considered "nothing". Also claimed that the terrorists may be looking for negotiations involving exchanging hostages, which gives some explanation as to why they said they were not looking for monetary rewards. "Before we transform this place into an abattoir, the government should move quickly to communicate with us. It is not about money; the government knows what we want".

G. Isenyo (2022) noted that over 200 criminals took control of the Kaduna International Airport twice, managing the navigational system, averting fights, actively engaging officers, and murdering a Nigerian Airspace Management Agency worker. The confidence of the terrorists made Nigeria look like a failed state, raising suspicions about the ability of the security services to secure important assets, persons, and valuables. N. Ayitogo<sup>3</sup> also reported that criminals shot down an Alpha fighter jet near the border between Zamfara and Kaduna States in the same month. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, 5,067 Nigerians were murdered by terrorists in 2021, which could grow to even include government houses if adequate caution is not taken. He suggested that the Nigerian government is not employing novel or creative methods to maintain its internal security structure, reflecting that the Taliban used a similar strategy that ultimately led to its acquisition of the Afghan government in August 2021, a chain of events that could repeat itself if left uncontrolled.

According to B. Maiangwa, U. O. Uzodike, A. Whetho and H. Onapajo (2012), the emergence of Boko Haram has caused significant security alarms in Nigeria and other countries. This is visible in the fact that grave violence, such as fatal strikes on the military, government figures, temples, public places, and regular people, is now commonplace. The terrorism is intensified by a few issues, like lacking safety, extensive elite unfairness, military fierceness, standing fiscal issues, and old and faltering infrastructure. Evidently, there is no certain signal that this devastating cycle of events will finish anytime soon.

<sup>1</sup> Gbadebo, B. (2022). *Kidnapped Train Passengers Beg International Community To Come To Their Aid*. Leadership. <https://leadership.ng/kidnapped-train-passengers-beg-international-community-to-come-to-their-aid/>.

<sup>2</sup> Omonobi, K., Nwabughioqu, L. & Hassan-Wuyo, I. (2022). *Terrorists to FG: Talk to us or we'll kill all 167 captives*. Vanguard. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/04/terrorists-to-fg-talk-to-us-or-we-kill-all-our-captives/>.

<sup>3</sup> Ayitogo, N. (2022). *Bandits Shoot Down Nigerian Air Force Jet – Official*. Premium Times. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/474542-just-in-bandits-shoot-down-nigerian-air-force-jet-official.html>.

*Worsening Insecurity in Nigeria and Its Implications for Peace and National Development*

B. H. Odalonu (2022) discussed the effects of Nigeria's escalating insecurity on national development and peace. Nigeria is currently plagued by an escalating number of security issues. These include acts of armed banditry, terrorism, farmer-herdsmen clashes, the Boko Haram insurgency, religious crises, intergroup tensions, ethnic and racial cleansing, ritual killings, and more. The threat of unemployment, poverty, and hunger has increased as a result of all these security issues, adding to the danger to citizens' lives and property.

E. B. Onime (2018) investigated the impact of security on Nigeria's economic development. In addition to having a direct impact on the populace, it also has an impact on the economy. Using descriptive qualitative analysis techniques and secondary source data, he examined its impact on a few economic parameters. According to the study, increased unemployment and declining tax revenue are just two of the ways that insecurity stifles economic growth, Aliyu, Ifatimehin and Benjamin (2024) stated that the socioeconomic development of Nigeria is being stifled and delayed by the level and extent of insecurity, which has increased over time and threatens life and property, hinders business operations, and deters both domestic and foreign investors. This growing wave of unease has not subsided and now poses a serious threat to the nation as a whole, threatening its continued existence as a single geographical entity. The proliferation of weapons, Nigeria's porous border, religious fanaticism, marginalisation, poverty, poor governance, unemployment, inadequate security architecture, and a weak security system are some of the factors that have contributed to the country's rising rate of insecurity (Igbuzor, 2011; Adeola, Oluyemi, 2012). According to estimates, Nigeria is home to more than 70 % of the estimated 8 million illegal firearms in West Africa (Edeko, 2011). The increase in insecurity has resulted in more deaths and property damage, as well as forced emigration, business closures, higher rates of unemployment and poverty, decreased domestic and foreign investment, and increased hunger and food shortages in Nigeria. The leaders should firmly establish ethical governance while securing the borders.

Another cause of insecurity in the nation, according to Nwagboso (2012), is the failure of Nigeria's successive administrations to address issues of poverty, unemployment, and unequal wealth distribution among ethnic groups. A. Oluwarotimi (2012) contended that effective administration is the answer to Nigeria's problem with insecurity. She claims that only through strengthening gov-

ernance standards – that is, by fostering a culture of good governance in which the government is accountable to the people – can the war against insecurity be won. According to her, good governance and security engagement are inextricably linked. Many others have made the connection between security and governance. The widespread consensus is that effective government is what maintains peace and security. Many others have made the connection between security and governance. The widespread consensus is that effective government is what maintains peace and security. However, as K. Oluwa<sup>1</sup> has noted, good governance is a function of effective, visionary, transparent, reliable, and credible political leadership, whose driving force is an improvement in the general well-being of the citizens through carefully planned, successfully implemented economic policies and human development programmes. The focus on people' welfare is the ultimate goal of governance. The operational circumstances of security apparatuses should be enhanced, and the whole security structure should be reformed and decentralised to enable swift responses to emergency security crises.

*Combating insurgency and terrorism in Nigeria: The Parliamentary Thesis*

The Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre<sup>2</sup> noted that, as part of its efforts to stop insecurity in Nigeria, the House of Representatives established a Special Committee on Security on Thursday, March 18. The resolution to set up the ad hoc committee followed a closed-door session of the House on Wednesday, March 17. The Cable Newspaper<sup>3</sup> also noted that the goal assigned to the Special Committee is to create a proposal that will be submitted to President Muhammadu Buhari for implementation in order to address the security situation in Nigeria. As one of the 19 recommendations made by the Special Committee on National Security, whose report was submitted to the President on the day after the escalation of insecurity in the country, the House of Representatives urged President Buhari to urgently consider using private

<sup>1</sup> Oluwa, K. (2012). *Fixing Nigeria: Good Governance as the Missing Link*. <http://newsbreaknigeria.com/.../Fixing+Nigeria%3A+Good+governance>.

<sup>2</sup> Policy and Legal Advocacy Center. (2021, March 18). *House of Representatives Sets Up Special Committee on Security*. <https://placng.org/i/house-of-representatives-sets-up-special-committee-on>.

<sup>3</sup> Akpan, S. (2021, July 13). *Create forest police, fish out moles in army – reps' security recommendations to Buhari*. TheCable. <https://www.thecable.ng/create-forest-police-fish-out-moles-in-army-reps-security-recommendations-to-buhari/>.

defence contractors for targeted security operations against insurgency and terrorism in the nation. The report of the committee presented to the House of Representatives was discussed in the Committee of the Whole, and the House called a summit to help find long-term solutions to the problem. In moving the motion for the summit's consideration, the Speaker claimed that many Nigerians from various backgrounds and experiences had been consulted on the issue to provide input. The following recommendations are made to the president:

*The following are critical points from the recommendations of the Special Committee on National Security in Nigeria:*

1. *There shall be increased training for the 40 000 Police Mobile Unit officers, and 1 000 shall be sent to each state and dispatched forthwith.*

2. *A new group shall be created within the Nigeria Police Force to oversee the training and assistance given to state-governed forest guards.*

3. *Screening and vetting of all military front-line officers shall be conducted in order to fish out moles and double agents amongst them that compromise security efforts.*

4. *To drive change, establish a Presidential Police Reform initiative and an operationally specialized unit within the Nigeria Police Force.*

5. *Immediate equipment requirements for rank-and-file police officers procured using the Nigerian Police Trust Fund.*

6. *Consider engaging private defense contractors in targeted operations against insurgency and terrorism.*

7. *Intelligence sharing amongst all security agencies is made compulsory by an executive protocol.*

8. *Roll out early warning systems – including CCTV cameras and surveillance equipment – across the country.*

9. *A national crisis centre is to be established within the Nigeria Police to coordinate civil security response and incident reporting.*

10. *Establish a civilianization program that should see civilian staff occupy positions, including non-tactical duties, in security agencies.*

11. *Articulate strategic communications campaigns to position national unity and peaceful coexistence.*

12. *Encourage the establishment of local security committees at each level of government, this time headed by the Nigerian Police Force.*

13. *The judicial and law enforcement systems should be digitised, and the national criminal database should be modernised.*

14. *Identify, map, and apprehend cult group leaders, violent agitators, and criminal networks.*

15. *Reduce reliance on imported security equipment by improving local military production facilities and private businesses.*

*Insurgency, Banditry, and Terrorism and the Impact of Foreign Partnership*

S. C. Unachukwu and I. B. Unachukwu (2021) noted that terrorism and insurgency continue to be difficult occurrences that require significant responses from governments, international communities, and agencies. Because of the countless hardships and harm it has caused to Nigeria and its worldwide allies, terrorism has assumed a central role in our country's discourse. The widespread disease has caused a number of social and economic upheavals, including the loss of life and property. Without success, the Nigerian Federation administration has waged a protracted war against terrorism for more than ten years.

A. P. Odeyemi (2022) claimed that for over 50 years now, the United States has maintained a close friendship and security alliance with Nigeria. He therefore noted that the key areas of concentration for these diplomatic connections include improved maritime and border security cooperation, military professionalisation, counterterrorism operations against Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa, defence commerce, and an enhanced security sector. Diplomatic ties between the United States and Nigeria have significantly contained the surge of insecurity in Nigeria. Partners from all over the world have helped to reduce terrorism in Nigeria. According to the U.S. Department of State<sup>1</sup> (DOS), U.S. Africa Command<sup>2</sup> (AFRICOM), Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), and Congressional Research Service (CRS), the U.S. has greatly invested in military assistance for Nigeria, largely to strengthen its operations against terrorist groups like Boko Haram and affiliates of ISIS. Assistance includes critical military equipment, such as the A-29 Super Tucano aircraft, with extensive associated training to build Nigeria's defence capabilities. In order to stop the group's cross-border activities in the Lake Chad region, the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) has also established a Multi-national Joint Task Force (MNJTF) of up to 10,000 soldiers made up of soldiers from Nigeria, the Niger Republic, Chad, Cameroon, and the Benin Republic<sup>4</sup> (Clarke, Lekalake, 2016).

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of State. <https://www.state.gov/>.

<sup>2</sup> United States Africa Command. <https://www.africom.mil/media-room/press-releases>.

<sup>3</sup> Congressional Research Service. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/>.

<sup>4</sup> Amnesty International. (2015, June 2). *Nigeria: Stars on their shoulders: Blood on their hands:*

A. P. Odeyemi (2022) questioned the effectiveness of aid given to Nigeria to reduce insecurity. US intervention programs, including maritime security, military professionalisation, counterterrorism efforts, and surplus defence items, had minimal impact. To ensure a secure society with productive citizens, Nigeria should seek assistance from neighboring countries and develop closer ties with them. Addressing potential reasons for kidnapping can help Nigeria create a forward-thinking and productive nation.

*Outsourcing the War on Insurgency and Terrorism in Nigeria*

The former Governor of Kaduna, Malam Nasir el-Rufai<sup>1</sup>, reportedly told President Buhari that if military action against bandits was not taken, governors from the region might hire mercenaries to defend their people. It has been noted that Section 14(2)(b) of the 1999 Constitution conflicts with the threat to hire mercenaries. "That is why I have come to see Mr. President, and I have also said that, if these actions are not taken, it becomes necessary for us as governors to take measures to protect our citizens, even if it means we will import mercenaries from outside the country to do it if our soldiers fail", he says, interrupting himself. We are going to do that; I swear to God. These individuals (terrorists) are making money. Due to their confidence and lack of respect for authority, Kaduna's governor, Malam Nasir el-Rufai, claimed to have told President Buhari that governors in the region might hire mercenaries to protect their citizens if military action against bandits was not taken.

The UN Mercenary Convention, also known as the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing, and Training of Mercenaries, was adopted by the UN on December 4, 1989, through resolution 44/34. A mercenary is someone who is hired to overthrow a "government or otherwise undermine the constitutional order of a state or undermine the territorial integrity of a state" and who is "motivated to take part therein primarily by the desire for significant private gain and is prompted by the promise or payment of material compensation", according to Article 1.2 of the definition of a mercenary in Article 1. On December 4, 1989, the United Nations adopted resolution 44/34 of the International

Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing, and Training of Mercenaries, also known as the UN Mercenary Convention<sup>2</sup>.

A German who joins the military of a country in which they are also citizens runs the risk of losing their citizenship if they are called up "for military duty in a military or military-like facility in support of a foreign power." British citizens are prohibited from enlisting in the armed forces of any country that is at war with another country that is at peace with Britain under the Foreign Enlistment Acts of 1819 and 1870, respectively, in the United Kingdom. One branch of the mercenary trade is the private military company (PMC), which is defined as "legally established enterprises that make a profit, either by providing services involving the potential exercise of armed force". Popular examples of PMCs include Sandline International, Gurkha Security Guards, Ltd., DynCorp International, and Blackwater Security Guards. The 1989 United Nations Mercenary Convention prohibiting the use of mercenaries is not ratified by a large number of nations, including the United States and the United Kingdom. They secure foreign investments, protect influential African leaders' real estate, intervene in intra-African conflicts, and do so mostly without considering the potential costs. Foreign private military companies are stationed in an increasing number of Africa's crisis-ridden nations. The Group for Research and Information on Peace and Security (GRIP), an independent research organisation with its headquarters in Brussels, recently published a study in which it was discovered that many mercenaries do not hesitate to commit crimes and violate human rights. The private security industry has a lengthy history on the African continent, whether in the Sahel, Mali, or the Central African Republic, said GRIP researcher Dusoulier. According to Dusoulier, the continent's abundant natural wealth and the weakness of some countries' governmental structures are the two elements that contribute to this scenario. According to the OERI expert, some African countries that have used private mercenary forces in the past include Angola, Sierra Leone, the G5 Sahel nations, Sudan, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and CAR. However, opposition to using mercenaries in Africa is growing. Bankole Adeoye of Nigeria, the AU commissioner for political

*War crimes committed by the Nigerian military.*  
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/1657/2015/en/>.

<sup>1</sup> Daily Trust. (2022, April 2). *We'll Bring In Foreign Mercenaries If FG Fails To End Terrorism – El-Rufai.* <https://dailytrust.com/well-bring-in-foreign-mercenaries-if-fg-fails-to-end-terrorism-el-rufai/>.

<sup>2</sup> *General Assembly resolution 44/34 International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing, and Training of Mercenaries. Adopted 04 December 1989.*  
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-convention-against-recruitment-use-financing-and>.



affairs, peace, and security, demanded the complete exclusion of mercenaries from the African continent.

#### *Recalling the Ex-Service Men to Address Nigerian Insecurity*

The Nigerian government is considering recalling retired law enforcement and military personnel to address the country's escalating insecurity and food security threats. This suggestion comes amid internal difficulties faced by the Nigerian Army during counterinsurgency campaigns against Boko Haram, such as corruption and poor soldier welfare conditions, which have hindered efforts to combat the rebels. These difficulties have been downplayed or denied by military authorities, leading to frequent mutinies among troops. Several retired military officers have advocated for the recall of former service members who are qualified to assist in the ongoing fight against terrorism, banditry, and other criminal activities<sup>1</sup>. These former officers argue that their experience can benefit and educate newer service members, and if called back into service, they can also provide assistance in areas where active service members are currently overwhelmed.

The argument immediately brings in variables such as age and physical capabilities, as one can see from the argument that retired military personnel should be harnessed to solve the security challenges in Nigeria. The retirees are 60 years old and thus might not have the physical capacity to perform some demanding security-related duties. Indeed, advancing age may diminish physical capacity, and people of younger years could be better positioned to handle tasks that involve speed, stamina, and sharp reflexes. Even though some people over 60 could still be fit, their willingness and ability to undertake riskier roles could be at a lower level compared to those in their younger years.

This explains why there might be another way to solve Nigeria's insecurity than by banking on retired military personnel. Security challenges are so dynamic and require fresh people at their peak of physical ability and sharpness of mental strategy. This is not to undermine the benefit of experience, exposure, and expertise that the retired military personnel would have brought to the advisory and strategic board on security matters. This will, therefore, mean that a balanced approach that puts in both persons who are younger and physically able with retired people of experience in advisory positions may just be the right recipe for curbing Nigeria's security

challenges. His view shows that there should be consideration of age and physical limitations in deployment to such sensitive positions, such that only those best suited for the job are recruited<sup>2</sup>.

In effect, therefore, concerns raised have thrown up important considerations that must be factored into any deployment of retired military personnel in solving the security problems of Nigeria. Experience is good, but there's also a factor of age and physical capacity in ensuring the most effective response to such complex security issues.

#### *Discussion of Findings*

The findings of this research paint a rather disturbing picture of the nation's security situation. Key among them are: The terrorist groups have become so emboldened to act without fear of any authority at all. Throughout the country, they have very successfully carried out a lot of socio-economic pain, killing, and displacement. All efforts to counter terrorist threats have been ad hoc and have not produced the required results to effectively deal with the crisis at hand. Current approaches have proved inadequate. Apart from the terrorist threat, the study harps on the growing separatist agitations, this cut almost across all regions of Nigeria. This implies that when terrorism is finally brought under control, the underlying tensions and calls for self-determination that cut across several groups will remain very potent. The findings suggest that a fundamentally new approach is required to deal with challenges such as terrorism, insurgency, banditry, and separatist movements. One key recommendation of this research work, therefore, is the convocation of a sovereign national conference, a platform wherein all the major groups and stakeholders in Nigeria can get together to talk about how they want to see their country and live together.

An all-inclusive dialogue and negotiation process is therefore essential. It will be an opportunity to air grievances, explore solutions, and establish a new national consensus on structure, governance, and the future of Nigeria. It is in this open and participatory process that sustainable peace and security can be achieved, solving not only the terrorist threat but also the deeper root causes of instability and conflicting visions in the country. These ad hoc, piecemeal approaches have been inadequate. What is now needed is an inclusive, comprehensive, and participatory process to chart a new pathway for Nigeria and its people. The outcome of this research thus serves

<sup>1</sup> Insecurity: Recall ex-service men now, retired military officers tell FG. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/11>

<sup>2</sup> New Agency of Nigeria. (2024). *Insecurity: any role for the ex-servicemen*. <https://nannews.ng/2024/02/03/insecurity-any-role-for-ex-servicemen/>.

as a clarion call and impetus for bold action to facilitate such a transformative national dialogue and negotiation.

**CONCLUSIONS.** The paper discusses countermeasures and engagements to address terrorism, banditry, and insurgency in northern Nigeria. It suggests poverty reduction, economic growth illumination programs, social reorientation, and primary school education. However, the study reveals that reactive security responses are incoherent and unsustainable, offering temporary

relief rather than permanent solutions. It calls for inclusive policies that capture the needs and aspirations of the people. An inclusive national conference is suggested to address ethno-religious issues and systemic marginalization, reducing political and religious tensions while aligning government policies with the people's will. This holistic approach can build long-term stability and peace, preventing separatist movements and ensuring lasting peace and stability for the nation.

## REFERENCES

1. Abadie, A., & Gardeazabal, J. (2008). Terrorism and the world economy. *European Economic Review*, 52(1). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euroecorev.2007.08.005>.
2. Adeola, G. L., & Oluyemi, F. (2012). The Political and Security Implications of Cross Border Migration between Nigeria and Her Francophone Neighbours. *International Journal of Social Science Tomorrow*, 1(3). <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Political-and-Security-Implications-of-Cross-Adeola-Fayomi/e22b62534b539662d00ecd9f61c0c9e119ad0cbb>.
3. Agbiboa, D. E. (2013). The Ongoing Campaign of Terror in Nigeria: Boko Haram versus the State. *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 2(3). DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5334/sta.cl>.
4. Akinola, A., & Uzodike, U. (2013). The Threat of 'Boko Haram' Terrorism and Niger Delta Militancy to Security and Development in Africa: From Myth to Reality. *Gandhi Marg*, 35(3), 391–418.
5. Aliyu, A., Ifatimehin, O. O., & Benjamin, F. U. (2024). Insecurity A Harbinger to Industrial Growth for Economic Development in Kogi State, Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration, Policy and Governance Research*, 2(3), 218–227.
6. Badiora, A. I. (2024, June 25). *Terror attacks and kidnappings spread in Nigeria: why Lagos could be a target*. The Conversation. <https://theconversation.com/terror-attacks-and-kidnappings-spread-in-nigeria-why-lagos-could-be-a-target-231881>
7. Clarke, S., & Lekalake, R. (2016). Extremism in Africa: Public opinion from the Sahel, Lake Chad, and the Horn. *Policy Paper*, 32. <https://www.afrobarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/r6-afropaperno32-violent-extremism-in-ss-africa-en.pdf>.
8. Edeko, S. E. (2011). The Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Africa: A Case Study of the Niger Delta in Nigeria. *Sacha Journal of Environmental Studies*, 1(2), 55–80.
9. Enders, W., & Sandler, T. (2012). *The political economy of terrorism* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
10. Igbuzor, O. (2011). Peace and Security Education: A Critical Factor for Sustainable Peace and National Development. *International Journal of Peace and Development Studies*, 2(1). <https://www.internationalscholarsjournals.com/articles/peace-and-security-education-a-critical-factor-for-sustainable-peace-and-national-development.pdf>.
11. Isenyo, G. (2022, March 26). *Kaduna Confirms Airport Attack, Says Troops Repelled Terrorists*. Punch. <https://punchng.com/kaduna-confirms-airport-attack-says-troops-repelled-terrorists/>.
12. Isyaku, A. (2013). Terrorism: A New Challenge to Nigeria Stability in the 21st Century. *International Affairs and Global Strategy*, 12(1), 16–24.
13. Liorca-Vivero, R. (2008). Terrorism and international tourism: New evidence. *Defense and Peace Economics*, 19(2), 169–188. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10242690701453917>.
14. Loimeier, R. (2012). Boko Haram: The Development of a Militant Religious Movement in Nigeria. *Africa Spectrum*, 47(2/3), 137–155.
15. Maiangwa, B., Uzodike, U. O., Whetho, A., & Onapajo, H. (2012). "Baptism by Fire": Boko Haram and the Reign of Terror in Nigeria. *Africa Today*, 59(2), 41–57. <https://doi.org/10.2979/africatoday.59.2.41>.
16. Ndujihe, C., Umoru, H., & Hassan, I. (2022, March 31). *Kaduna Train Attack Questions Our Capacity to Govern Govs*. Vanguard. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/03/kaduna-train-attack-questions-our-capacity-to-govern-govs/>.
17. Nwagboso, C. I. (2012). Security Challenges and Economy of the Nigerian State (2007–2011). *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 2(6), 244–258.
18. Odalonu, B. H. (2022). Worsening Insecurity in Nigeria and its Implications on Governance and National Development. *African Journal of Humanities and Contemporary Education Research*, 5(1), 31–49.
19. Odeyemi, A. P. (2022). United States-Nigeria Diplomatic Ties and Control of Insecurity in Nigeria. *International Journal of International Relations, Media and Mass Communication Studies*, 8(2), 25–32.

20. Ogbaji, J. O. (2023). The Role of Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (Nfiu) In Curbing Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing 2005–2021. *Yamtara-Wala Journal of Arts, Management and Social Sciences*, 3(3). <https://yajamss.com.ng/index.php/yajamss/article/view/145>.

21. Oluwarotimi, A. (2012). *US to use more Balanced Security Strategy to Fight Insecurity in Nigeria*. Leadership Newspaper, 10 Feb.

22. Onime, B. E. (2018). Insecurity and Economic Growth in Nigeria: A Diagnostic Review. *European Scientific Journal*, 14(4), 377–391. <https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2018.v14n4p377>.

23. Onuoha, F. C. (2013). Understanding Boko Haram's Attacks on Telecommunication Infrastructure. In I. Mantzikos (Ed.), *Boko Haram: Anatomy of a Crisis* (pp. 16–22). E-International Relations.

24. Unachukwu, S. C., & Unachukwu, I. B. (2021). An Appraisal of the Scope and Implications of Terrorism and Security Challenges in Nigeria. *International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development*, 6(1), 1831–1837.

Received the editorial office: 28 September 2024

Accepted for publication: 20 December 2024

### **ОЛАГОКЕ ОЛУВАФЕМІ АВОТАЙО,**

магістр наук,

Державний університет Осуна (Осогбо, Нігерія),

кафедра політичних наук;

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9768-8910>,

e-mail: [olagoke.awotayo@uniosun.edu.ng](mailto:olagoke.awotayo@uniosun.edu.ng);

### **НІМАТ ОЛУВАЙОМІ ЮСУФ,**

магістр наук,

Державний університет Осуна (Осогбо, Нігерія),

кафедра досліджень миру та врегулювання конфліктів;

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-7122-757>,

e-mail: [Oluwayomi.yusuf@uniosun.edu.ng](mailto:Oluwayomi.yusuf@uniosun.edu.ng);

### **САМУЕЛЬ ОЛАДОСУ АДЕДАЙО,**

магістр наук,

Державний університет Осуна (Осогбо, Нігерія),

інститут глобальних проблем та сталого розвитку

## **БЕЗПЕКА НІГЕРІЇ: СТРАТЕГІЇ БОРОТЬБИ З ПОВСТАНЦЯМИ ТА ТЕРОРИЗМОМ**

У статті оцінено стратегічні відповіді уряду Нігерії на нерозв'язні проблеми, пов'язані з повстанцями, бандитизмом і тероризмом, з якими стикаються переважно північні райони країни, а також визначено ключові ініціативи, такі як створення 7-ї дивізії нігерійської армії, серед інших міжнародних і місцевих ініціатив, таких як Об'єднана цивільно-військова оперативна група. Іншим спірним питанням є голосування на підтримку Національної асамблеєю пропозиції про залучення найманців до оборони, що відображає дебати, які тривають, щодо заходів безпеки. Методологічний підхід роботи – якісний, з тематичним аналізом даних із вторинних джерел, таких як газети, книги і наукові журнали. Отримані дані свідчать про те, що стратегія безпеки Нігерії є здебільшого реактивною і не спрямована на усунення фундаментальних першопричин насильства, якими є соціально-економічна нерівність, політична маргіналізація та історичні образи. Обмеження спеціальних політичних заходів у сфері безпеки очевидні: вони, як правило, надають перевагу короткостроковим рішенням, а не довгостроковій стабільності. Зокрема, саме такі варіанти використання найманців піддаються серйозній критиці, особливо з точки зору наслідків альтернатив для національного суверенітету й адекватного реагування на першопричини такого виклику. За відсутності політики, спрямованої на усунення першопричин, до чого наполегливо закликає це дослідження, слід продовжувати інклюзивний національний діалог між різними етнічними групами та всередині них. Це могло б вирішити не лише етнорелігійну напруженість, але й системну маргіналізацію різноманітних етнічних груп Нігерії. У висновку наголошено, що необхідна послідовна стратегія, яка б виходила за межі негайного реагування на проблеми безпеки і поєднувала соціально-економічний розвиток із належним урядуванням. Застережено, що якщо ці фундаментальні питання не будуть вирішені, навіть якщо буде подолано тероризм, цикл насильства і загроза сепаратистських виступів, ймовірно, продовжуватиметься.

Цілісний підхід до національної безпеки є обов'язковим для забезпечення довгострокового миру і стабільності в Нігерії.

**Ключові слова:** стратегії, безпека, повстанці, бандитизм, тероризм, контрзаходи, мир і розвиток.

**Цитування (ДСТУ 8302:2015):** Awotayo O. O., Yusuf N. O., Adedayo S. O. Safeguarding Nigeria: strategies for combating insurgency and terrorism. *Law and Safety*. 2024. No. 4 (95). Pp. 47–58. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32631/pb.2024.4.04>.

**Citation (APA):** Awotayo, O. O., Yusuf, N. O., & Adedayo, S. O. (2024). Safeguarding Nigeria: strategies for combating insurgency and terrorism. *Law and Safety*, 4(95), 47–58. <https://doi.org/10.32631/pb.2024.4.04>.